Case No. 20xx-27-DJMQ-29

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Case No. 20xx-27-DJMQ-29

by mrs_d

Summary

Batman's abbreviated case file for Case No. 20xx-27-DJMQ-29, AKA The LexCorp Four. Accurate up to chapter 45 of the main story.

Notes

Hello lovely readers!

I must apologize— I am taking an unexpected hiatus from posting new chapters. I have a handful already written, but upon reflection they need more tweaking (and a not small number of rewrites D:) before I can share. I hope this bonus content will make up for it.

This is Batman's abbreviated case file for the LexCorp Four, accurate up to the Garden Party (chapter 45). I wrote this mainly for me, as a way of keeping track of evidence and events, but I thought it might be fun for you to read as well, since there are some surprising character moments here for Bruce. When the main story is finished, I may update this to reflect the comprehensive case details... we'll see!

I hope you enjoy, and, as always, thank you for your patience as I continue to work on the main story.

Love,
MrsD

P.S. Out of an abundance of caution, I've tagged this with the graphic violence content warning. It's not terribly graphic, but it IS a murder case, so....

P.P.S. In case you are wondering, this is what Dick was reviewing on the tablet in chapters 28 and 33, and the file that Bruce is updating/reviewing in chapter 35.

Case No. 20xx-27-DJMQ-29

Opened: May 21, 20xx
Closed: -
Status: Active/Ongoing
Source: Superman/Justice League
Type: Suspicious Death, Homicide (Multiple), Break-and-Enter, Robbery, Harassment
Sub-type: Organized Crime/Conspiracy
Suspects: None specified; Falcone syndicate; Lex Luthor/LexCorp

Summary:

Investigation into four suspicious deaths, all connected to LexCorp. Victims were direct subordinates to Dr. Michaela Rota (fourth victim). All were released from employment prior to their deaths, save Dr. Rota herself, who was still employed by LexCorp at the time of her death.

My formal involvement commenced May 21, 20xx based on intelligence from Superman regarding the sudden death of Dr. Michaela Rota, the head of LexCorp's biomedical lab in Metropolis. While peripherally aware of the four isolated deaths in Gotham City, they did not seem overly suspicious or related until the victims' connection to Dr. Rota and the LexCorp biomedical lab was discovered.

Update: May 25, 20xx

Gordon is not convinced Rota's death is an accident, either. He suspects the involvement of the Falcone crime syndicate based on the similar death of a key witness in a case against Don Carmine Falcone two years ago (cf. 20xx-84-DKUA-09). I will admit there are similarities, though an investigation into possible links between the victims, LexCorp, and Falcone has so far been unproductive.

Update: July 7, 20xx

Meeting with Lex Luthor resulted in introduction to Dr. Sebastian Cronin, recently appointed head of the Metropolis biomedical lab, replacing Rota.

Update: July 8, 20xx

Witnessed Cronin communicating with Gabriel Lavaste of the Falcone

crime syndicate (cf. 20xx-21-DKYR-05).

Update: July 9, 20xx

Meeting with Lavaste eliminated him from suspicion of murder, but confirmed Cronin has financial ties to Falcone crime syndicate; he paid Lavaste an unspecified sum of money. Allegedly, the money went to Don Falcone, though for what purpose remains unclear.

Update: August 2, 20xx

Dr. Adam James Marcus of Wayne Enterprises added as possible intended fifth victim.

Update: August 4, 20xx

New evidence provided by Dr. Adam James Marcus of Wayne Enterprises. Evidence consists of audio recording given by Rota (fourth victim) as a voicemail message 03:16 May 10.

Update: August 6, 20xx

My investigation has revealed links between each of the suspicious deaths and Shady Pines Mortuary in Blüdhaven (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12). All victims' bodies were cremated there; previously, I only linked Close (second victim) to this mortuary, as there is obvious evidence of a cover-up. All victim profiles and report summaries below have been updated to include reference to the Shady Pines case.

Update: August 7, 20xx

Nightwing added to access list.

Update: August 26, 20xx

New evidence acquired by Nightwing indicates that corruption amongst Blüdhaven officials may be hiding under the guise of donations to the Blüdhaven General Hospital Foundation, the BPD Children's Charity, or Shady Pines Funeral Home itself. Nightwing acquired a list of donors from the last three years; my search for entries across these organizations is ongoing.

Victim Profile (1)

Name: Blake Hiss
Age: 27

Sex: M
Gender: NB

Last Known Occupation: Lab Assistant, LexCorp

Stated Manner of Death: Accidental
Actual Manner of Death: Unknown

Stated Cause of Death: Drowning
Actual Cause of Death: Unknown

Stated Mechanism of Death: Lack of oxygen
Actual Mechanism of Death: Unknown

Summarized Timeline:

October 26: Left LexCorp (Metropolis).

January 31: Last confirmed sighting, Loose Seal Saloon, approximately 01:35.

February 2: Family files missing persons report.

February 10: Body discovered, Gotham marina.

February 18: Death deemed not suspicious; GCPD case closed.

February 19: Body released to the family.

February 21: Body cremated at Shady Pines Mortuary (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12).

Report Summary:

Blake Hiss left LexCorp in late October to pursue an unspecified new opportunity. I have been unable to verify subsequent employment. Family filed missing persons report February 2. Hiss was last seen partying at the Loose Seal Saloon on Gotham's waterfront, January 31 between 01:20 and 01:50.

Body found in Gotham marina February 10, badly decomposed after a week of unseasonably warm weather (and chemical residue of the waters off Gotham City). Coroner was unable to establish an exact date of death. No signs of obviously fatal trauma on the body, according to the autopsy report. Given Hiss' last known whereabouts, the police declared that they had died of drowning. GCPD called it 'death by misadventure' and closed the case February 18.

A close examination of the GCPD case file found several inconsistencies. The lead investigator had misidentified the bar; rather than the Loose Seal, Hiss was said to have been drinking at the Pirate's Hook, a bar much closer to the place where Hiss' body washed up. Whether this mistake was due to negligence or malice remains to be seen (Gordon is investigating the officer in question); however, this error led the investigation to a dead end. The GCPD could find no eyewitness accounts or CCTV of Hiss at or around the Pirate's Hook, but a lack of evidence did not stop the investigator from declaring this as fact.

Update: August 20, 20xx

My own investigation into Hiss' life, as well as other bars along Gotham's eastern waterfront, uncovered that their last night alive had been spent at the Loose Seal Saloon, not the Pirate's Hook. By the time I made this discovery, the Loose Seal's CCTV footage was long gone; however, the bar manager came forward with eyewitness testimony revealing that Hiss had been present at the bar that night and that someone (a man with no distinguishing characteristics) had followed them out. Further investigation into this man has turned up nothing.

The autopsy asserts that Hiss died by drowning, despite there being no record of water in the lungs— yet another indication of corruption on multiple levels in this case. The body has since been cremated, so exhumation is impossible.

Victim Profile (2)

Name: Tiffany Close
Age: 34
Sex: F
Gender: F

Last Known Occupation: Post-Doctorate Researcher, LexCorp (Metropolis)

Stated Manner of Death: Homicide
Actual Manner of Death: Homicide

Stated Cause of Death: GSW, stomach (9mm handgun)
Actual Cause of Death: GSW, stomach and left kidney (unconfirmed), Glock 19 (unconfirmed)

Stated Mechanism of Death: Blood loss
Actual Mechanism of Death: Blood loss

Summarized Timeline:

August 31: Post-doctorate research placement ended at LexCorp.

February 26: Last known sighting, Metropolis Public University, approximately 12:15.

February 27: Body discovered, the Cauldron.

March 20: Case labelled ‘cold’ by GCPD.

March 23: Body cremated at Shady Pines Mortuary (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12).

Report Summary:

Tiffany Close completed a post-doctoral research placement in Rota’s lab on August 31. According to friends, she was employed at the time of her death, though none knew where, and I have been unable to verify this myself. On February 27, her body was found in a dead-end alley in the Cauldron district at 04:45 by a trash collector. His report was the most detailed document in the GCPD’s case file. The police investigated just long enough to learn that she was shot with a 9mm pistol, the most common handgun in the world, and that there were no witnesses to the crime. The coroner determined time of death to be approximately three hours prior to Close’s discovery, but left no details as how this conclusion was reached.

In taking a closer look, I have been able to make educated guesses as to the make and model of the pistol, as well as the angle of impact, but this hasn’t resulted in any real breakthroughs. Following up with area residents and local business owners led to no accounts of gunshots or in fact anything suspicious on the night in question, and street sources are equally oblivious as to a possible perpetrator or motive for Close’s murder.

With such common ballistics and no other leads, GCPD labelled Close’s death a cold case on March 20 and re-assigned its detectives to other cases, barring the discovery of new information that might re-activate the investigation.

This decision became irreversible on March 23, when Close’s body was cremated, apparently by accident. The limited documentation I could find to explain this decision seemed to indicate that Close was somehow mistaken for an unclaimed 87-year-old Jane Doe who’d died of natural causes some months prior. I have yet to prove my suspicion

that this mix-up was no accident and is instead the most damning sign of a cover-up.

Update: June 13, 20xx

I was able to track down Close's circle of hiking friends and share the news of her passing. Bruce Wayne made an anonymous donation to their online fundraiser to cover the cost of travel expenses, so they could gather and spread Close's ashes on the trail where they hiked together every summer.

Victim Profile (3)

Name: Anthony Siemens
Age: 58
Sex: M
Gender: M

Last Known Occupation: Lab Supervisor (retired), LexCorp (Metropolis)

Stated Manner of Death: Accidental
Actual Manner of Death: Accidental (unconfirmed)

Stated Cause of Death: Carbon monoxide poisoning
Actual Cause of Death: Carbon monoxide poisoning (unconfirmed)

Stated Mechanism of Death: Lack of oxygen
Actual Mechanism of Death: Lack of oxygen (unconfirmed)

Summarized Timeline:

November 30: Retired from LexCorp.

April 21: Last known sighting, outside his home in Metropolis suburb, approximately 16:45.

April 23: Yacht fire reported at 00:55, Gotham marina; body discovered below decks.

April 24: Death deemed not suspicious; GCPD case closed.

April 25: Body released to the family.

April 28: Body cremated at Shady Pines Mortuary (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12).

April 30: FDGC statement provokes backlash from Siemens' former colleagues.

Report Summary:

Anthony Siemens was the supervisor at the biomedical lab and Dr. Rota's right hand until he took an early retirement package at the end of November.

On April 23, at approximately 01:00, an anonymous citizen called 9-1-1 to report a yacht on fire in the Gotham marina. Emergency response personnel were mobilized immediately, but they were too late the save the boat's only passenger, asleep below decks. It was later determined that, while his body was so badly burned that the coroner had to consult dental records to positively identify him, Siemens had actually died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty motor that ultimately overheated and caused the fire. Investigators further discovered that the yacht's electric CO and smoke detectors were non-functional, and that neither device had a battery back-up.

The death of Anthony Siemens—a well-off, white, widowed grandfather just a few months into his retirement—caused a bit of a stir in the papers, with fire officials calling his loss a 'tragic accident' and using it as an opportunity for a PSA about the importance of life-saving equipment. This in turn caused another stir, as many of Siemens' former LexCorp colleagues spoke publicly about how shocked they were that Siemens would be so careless about his safety.

Dozens of LexCorp employees, including Dr. Michaela Rota, spoke to the press, praising Siemens as a diligent, safety-conscious man. He'd trained new employees in how to make their workplace safer. He'd held the chair of the Health and Safety Committee several times over the course of his long career. But none of those who spoke out seemed to think that there was anything suspicious about Siemens' death. It was surprising, yes, and tragic, but explainable. Siemens had made an all-too common mistake, and it had cost him his life.

I disagree, but with the body cremated within days of the autopsy, and the boat destroyed by fire, there doesn't seem to be much hope of finding physical evidence to the contrary.

Victim Profile (4)

Name: Michaela Rota
Age: 42
Sex: F

Gender: F

Last Known Occupation: Head of Biomedical Research, LexCorp (Metropolis)

Stated Manner of Death: Accidental
Actual Manner of Death: Unknown

Stated Cause of Death: Drowning
Actual Cause of Death: Unknown

Stated Mechanism of Death: Lack of oxygen
Actual Mechanism of Death: Unknown

Summarized Timeline:

May 10: Last known sighting, Pour Café, 00:30.

May 10: Last known sighting of car (unconfirmed), Robert Kane Memorial Bridge, approximately 04:00.

May 10: Family files missing persons report.

May 13: Family goes to media; anonymous tip reveals sighting of car.

May 15: Body washes ashore downriver, Gotham outskirts.

May 17: GCPD find car in river near Kane Bridge.

May 19: Death deemed not suspicious; GCPD case closed.

May 20: Body released to the family.

May 21: Body cremated at Shady Pines Mortuary (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12).

Report Summary:

Dr. Michaela Rota was the head of LexCorp's Metropolis biomedical lab. She was the only one of the four victims still working for LexCorp at the time of her death.

On May 10, just two weeks after speaking out with regard to Siemens' death, Rota disappeared in the middle of the night. Rota's sister, who lives in the same apartment building, reported Rota missing after she failed to come to brunch that morning. She went to Rota's unit, and, upon receiving no answer at the door, used her key to enter. She

found the place undisturbed, with Rota's keys, purse, shoes, and jacket missing. Rota had told her sister that she was going out to meet a friend the previous evening; Rota's sister and this friend got into contact that morning and concluded that Rota hadn't made it home.

They contacted the police immediately, who took the report but did little else. Three days later, Rota's sister went to the media with the story, giving them a picture of Rota and her car. Not long after, the police got a report from someone who claimed to see Rota's car stopped on the Kane Memorial Bridge between 03:30 and 04:30 May 10. Rota and her friend had parted ways around 00:30, and Rota would have had no reason to cross this bridge, either to get to where she was meeting her friend or to get home at the end of the night. No other reports or clues were found until May 15, when Rota's body washed up on the shore downriver. GCPD then dragged the river and found her vehicle in a state consistent with a single vehicle collision.

GCPD declared Rota's death accidental. They posited that Rota had either had more to drink with her friend than her friend thought, or she had gone out after leaving her friend and got inebriated, then crashed her car and ended up in the river. When Rota's family and friends shot back in the media that Rota did not drink or do drugs, the police changed the narrative to suit this information, claiming that Rota may have been fatigued or distracted. The family spoke out against this as well, but the police ignored them, closing the case just a few days later. The family continued to hassle the lead detective, however, and a social media campaign has kept the story alive.

I have examined the autopsy results closely and found inconsistencies similar with those found in Hiss' case. Like Hiss, the coroner's conclusion was death by accidental drowning, but Rota had no water in her lungs. She did, however, have a very serious head wound that likely would have proved fatal had her car not ended up in the river. The fact that her body was recovered after spending some time submerged in water obviously hampered any investigation into her physical state. The body has since been cremated (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12).

Update: August 3, 20xx

Previously unknown associate of Rota, Dr. Adam James Marcus of Wayne Enterprises, provided proof that Rota was alive as late as 03:16 May 10. This places her time of death between 03:20 and 05:30 May 10.

Update: August 4, 20xx

Transcript of voicemail message from Dr. Michaela Rota to Dr. Adam James Marcus. Received 03:16 May 10 20xx.

Transcript begins:

[sound of rushing air] [sound of a car engine] AJ! *[cough]* AJ, I am so— so sorry. *[sniff] [throat-clearing]* It's all my fault. The generator, I— remember? Remember when we thought we could save the world? *[sobbing] [coughing]* I'm gonna toss my phone in the river after this, so they can't find it. AJ, promise me, okay? *[sniff]* They know, and— and they want it. LexCorp knows, okay, they know what this thing can do, and— and they're lying. Don't trust them. *[sobbing] [coughing]* My team— my team's dead. I'm dead, and they know. They're covering it up. The Falcones— shit! *[cough]* I gotta go. *[sniff]* I hope they never find this. I love you, AJ. I've always loved you. *[sound of rushing air intensifying] [loud clatter]*

Transcript ends.

Update: August 21, 20xx

After receiving the voicemail transcribed above, I acquired recordings of GCPD interviews with known associates of all victims. These revealed no new information for the first three victims, but I learned that Rota had reported feeling unwell to her friend and sister in the two days leading up to her disappearance. I was unable to find anything medically significant in the autopsy report that would have explained this—no signs of poison or illness—but since the autopsy reports may have been doctored (cf. 20xx-14-AYXJ-12), these can't be trusted with certainty.

Victim Profile (5)

Note: Possible intended target only.

Name: Adam James (AJ) Marcus
Age: 41
Sex: M
Gender: M

Occupation: Head of Biomedical Research Laboratory, Wayne Enterprises (Gotham City)

Summarized Timeline:

July 26, 21:36: Wayne Enterprises Biomedical Research Laboratory security system detects a breach.

July 26, 21:49: GCPD arrive but find no sign of the suspect.

July 26, 22:31: Bruce Wayne arrives at the lab and finds Marcus already present.

July 27, 01:19: Marcus is the last to leave the lab.

July 27, 03:02: I conduct a thorough investigation of the crime scene.

July 27, 14:43: Marcus' home is broken into by persons unknown.

July 29, 16:58: Photographic evidence provided to GCPD by anonymous informant (cf. 20xx-6-ULAB-1) shows break-in.

July 29, 17:15: Bruce Wayne is made aware of Marcus' absence from Wayne Enterprises.

July 29, 17:29: GCPD arrive to find Marcus' home dishevelled but empty, with signs that Marcus may have left of his own accord.

July 29, 18:06: Upon speaking with the GCPD, Bruce Wayne discovers that Marcus appears to have been missing since July 27.

July 29, 22:39: I arrive at Marcus' home and begin my investigation.

July 30, 04:14: I am informed of Marcus' presence at Wayne Manor.

July 30, 04:52: Bruce Wayne interviews Marcus.

July 30, 11:30: GCPD interview Marcus.

July 30, 22:59: I acquire Marcus' evidence.

August 3: Marcus is placed under the protection of the Justice League and moved to a secret secure location.

September 27: Marcus attends Wayne Enterprises Garden Party at Wayne Manor, under my and Superman's protection. His presence results in no reaction from LexCorp employees also present.

Report Summary:

My investigation has revealed that the break-ins at Wayne Enterprises and Marcus' home were most likely intended as intimidation

techniques, meant as retribution for Marcus' refusal to accept an offer from LexCorp to serve as Rota's replacement. Given that nothing of value was taken, it is also possible that the break-ins were motivated by a desire to gain information that Marcus may have regarding Rota and/or Rota's work. As surveillance footage at the Wayne Enterprises lab was deactivated during the crime, I cannot verify at this time that data may have been accessed. As for Marcus' home, Marcus had no camera system. Marcus claims that nothing seems to be missing; however, the perpetrators may have taken photographs of written material.

My investigation into the break-ins reveal an MO similar to that employed by many low-level Gotham criminals—which is to say, not terribly sophisticated—though the deactivation of the cameras in Marcus' lab gives me pause. I will continue to investigate and interview my contacts to see what I can uncover, but I am not optimistic. Based on my assessment, it is likely that the perpetrators, like Lavaste, were hired and paid to do a job with no knowledge of the larger scheme.

Marcus has shared information that paints Rota as a whistle-blower, aware that her team was being targeted and that the Falcone crime syndicate was somehow involved in their deaths (see voicemail transcript, above). Whether LexCorp is aware that Marcus had this information remains to be seen.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!